

On making sufficient elevation to find Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Robins, a decided increase both of numbers and species at any one spot was easily noticeable. This increase held good until a lower level beyond Highlands was reached.

Vireo solitarius alticola was easily found by its song in the open hard woods of the tableland near Highlands, where most of our birds were seen, though found also at an elevation approximately 500 feet lower as we left the plateau. They proved shy, flying from tree-top to tree-top well out of range. A single specimen reminds us strongly of *V. cassinii* as taken at Santa Barbara, California.

At the level of Highlands, exactly such species as Mr. Brewster has previously mentioned were taken, and none other. *Contopus borealis* was still on his hemlock-top, and rhododendron swamps through which the road was cut proved several times to be well filled with *Dendroica caerulescens*.

On leaving home our intentions were to go well into or over the 'Smokies,' but incessant rains and sickness finally drove us back to pure water. Few northern digestions could accomplish the feat of properly nourishing a man on native fare.

ADDITIONS TO THE CATALOGUE OF THE BIRDS OF KANSAS, WITH NOTES IN REGARD TO THEIR HABITS.

BY N. S. GOSS.

Æchmophorus occidentalis. WESTERN GREBE.—For this addition to our list, we are indebted to Prof. F. H. SNOW, who reports that a young male was killed November 3, 1887, on the Kansas River, at Lawrence.* The birds are quite common on the northwestern part of the continent, breeding in reeds, ponds, and lakes east to northern Dakota and Manitoba, wintering along the Pacific coast south into Lower California, but this capture is the first mention that I can find of their appearance east of the Rocky Mountains south of their breeding grounds. I have noticed this large species at San Diego several times, and in the winter and early

*See Auk, Vol. V, p. 201.

spring of 1882, I had a good opportunity to observe them on the waters of Puget Sound. The birds ride the water lightly, and their silky plumage, slender build, long waving necks and graceful carriage can but attract the attention of the most indifferent of observers. Like all of the race they are expert swimmers and divers, and can quietly sink out of sight in the water without an apparent motion, but their ordinary manner of diving is to spring forward with a stroke of their feet, almost clearing the water and disappearing about three feet from the starting point. They are at home on the waves, and it is almost impossible to force the birds to take wing, but when in the air they fly with great rapidity, with neck and feet stretched out to their full extent, and in alighting, often do not attempt to slacken their speed, but strike the water with partially closed wings with a force that carries them on the surface from twenty to forty feet.

Their nests are usually built on broken down reeds or rushes growing in water from two to three feet deep, and made of decayed vegetation brought up from the bottom. Eggs, two to five, dull bluish white. A set of four eggs collected at Devil's Lake, Dakota, June 1, 1884, measures 2.20×1.47 , 2.26×1.47 , 2.30×1.49 , 2.32×1.50 inches. In form they vary from elliptical ovate to elongate ovate.

Two sets of eggs, one of four, the other of five, taken by Capt. Charles E. Bendire, May 28, 1883, on a marsh in Klamath County, Oregon, average 2.31×1.52 . He writes that they often lay seven eggs, and possibly more.

Oidemia perspicillata. SURF SCOTER.—A rare visitant; captured October 29, 1887, on the Kansas River, above the dam, at Lawrence, by Mr. A. L. Bennett of Emporia.*

This species of Sea Duck is abundant upon both coasts, and during the breeding season quite common upon the large northern inland waters; breeding from Sitka, Alaska, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence north to the Arctic coast. Their food consists largely of shell-fish (the mussel is a favorite, the shells of which appear to digest as easily as the animal within them) and fishes, and various forms of life also help to make up the bill of fare. Their flesh is coarse, and rather rank in flavor. The birds are at home as well in the surging surf as upon the smoother waters, resting and sleeping at night out upon the open waters. They rise from the surface in a running, laborious manner, but when fairly on the wing fly rapidly, and in stormy weather hug close to the water. While feeding they are very active, constantly and rapidly diving one after the other, a continual disappearing and popping up.

Picicorvus columbianus. CLARKE'S NUTCRACKER.—Mr. L. L. Jewell of Irving kindly sent me for examination a portion of the skin saved from a male bird shot Aug. 13, 1888, by Mr. Chas. Netz near the south line of Marshall County. Dr. Cooper met with a straggling pair at Fort Kearney, Nebraska, and Mr. G. S. Agersborg, a pair in southeastern Dakota, but like the Kansas visitor, accidental wanderers. It is seldom found

*See Auk, Vol. V, p. 202.

below an altitude of 4000 feet. This bird has the actions and habits of several species. Like the Jays, it is at times noisy and in flocks; and when upon the ground it hops about in the same manner. It clings like the Woodpeckers to the side of a tree while it hunts in old excavations, interstices of the bark, etc., for the various forms of life found therein; and its flight is similar to theirs. In clasping with its sharp claws the cones on the pines, and other coniferous trees, in order to pry with its bill for the seeds, it often hangs head downward, swaying back and forth, with the ease and movements of the Titmice. It is a very shy bird, and at or near its nesting place, silent.

In May, 1879, my brother found the birds breeding near Fort Garland, Colorado; it was too late in the season for their eggs, but in one nest he found two young birds; he says the old bird sat very close, only leaving when touched by his hand. The nest was built near the end of a horizontal limb of a pine tree, about ten feet from the ground, in an open, conspicuous situation. It was bulky, and coarsely constructed of twigs, sticks, strips of bark, rootlets, grass, moss, etc., and very deeply hollowed the bird, when on it, showing only part of her bill and tail, the latter pointing almost directly upward. At a distance the nest would have been taken for a squirrel's nest.

Capt. Charles E. Bendire writes me that in the month of April, 1876-1878, he found in the vicinity of Camp Harney, Oregon, quite a number of their nests, similar to the one described above, at a height of from twenty-five to seventy-five feet from the ground, a few with eggs, and gives the following dimensions of four eggs: $1.30 \times .92$, $1.26 \times .95$, $1.22 \times .95$, $1.20 \times .90$ inches. He says the usual number is three; the ground color, light grayish green, irregularly spotted and blotched with a deeper shade of gray, principally about the larger end; the shape is elongated oval, considerably pointed at the smaller end.

The following birds, taken in the State, were in the Goss Ornithological Collection at the time of the publication of my Revised Catalogue.

Phalænoptilus nuttalli nitidus. FROSTED POOR-WILL.—A single specimen, a female, shot by me at Neosho Falls, September 23, 1881, entered as *Phalænoptilus nuttalli*, has been since identified as this form.

Grus canadensis. LITTLE BROWN CRANE.—This bird was omitted by oversight from the catalogue. It is not uncommon during migration.

BIRD NOTES FROM LITTLE GULL ISLAND, SUFFOLK CO., N. Y.

BY BASIL HICKS DUTCHER.

LITTLE GULL ISLAND is a member of the chain of islands that extends across the eastern end of Long Island from Orient Point, the northeastern extremity of Long Island, to Watch Hill, Rhode